

Testimony of Anisha Lewis

UConn School of Medicine- Class of 2023

Appropriations Committee

My name is Anisha Lewis and I am a third year medical student at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. First, I would like to thank you for all of the support that you have given to UConn School of Medicine and UConn Health. I am writing to share my experience and to urge you to continue your generous support of this institution.

I was born and raised in Connecticut. When I was introduced to the UConn Health system during my junior year of high school, the trajectory of my life changed and I made the decision to become a doctor. As a high school student, I had the amazing opportunity to participate in research through the Health Career Opportunity Programs Office (HCOP) and I continued to engage with the health center and be enriched through multiple summer programs throughout my college years. Through HCOP, I was able to build an amazing network of supportive faculty, physicians, and researchers. After graduating from college, I returned to UConn Health to conduct research for 3 years. The sense of community and support that I felt at UConn was unmatched. When it was time to apply to medical school there was no question in my mind that I wanted to attend UConn.

My desire was to attend a school that provided me with the opportunity to grow into a physician, a scientist, a provider, and an advocate for the community. That was UConn. UConn provides me with a well-rounded medical education which includes meaningful clinical experiences, scholarly research, and community activism. As a future physician and an advocate for my community, I aspire to eliminate barriers to health care in order to achieve health equity. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted racial and ethnic disparities that existed within our health system. Various initiatives through UConn have focused on addressing these existing disparities. At UConn, I had the privilege of serving as the Student National Medical Association chapter president with the goal of supporting current and future underrepresented minority medical students and addressing the needs of underserved communities. We fostered community by acting on a commitment to diversity by initiating honest and compassionate dialogue on racism and socioeconomic classism through forums and book clubs. We provided hypertension screening and health and wellness information to underserved community members. We also worked to increase the number of culturally competent and socially conscious physicians. We participated in Virtual Career Expos and panels to expose youth to careers in medicine and increase diversity of the health care providers.

In conclusion, the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, in addition to HCOP, contributes to recruitment students of diverse groups and supports efforts aimed at addressing the needs of underserved communities. I urge you to continue or increase your support of UConn School of Medicine and UConn Health so that the incredible work can continue.